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19. OCCURRENCE OF *ZEBRIAS KERALENSIS* JOGLEKAR (PISCES: SOLEIDAE) OFF VISAKHAPATNAM, WITH A NOTE ON ITS TAXONOMY

One soleid flat fish, belonging to the genus *Zebrias* Jordan & Snyder, was collected from trawl catches off Visakhapatnam, and identified as *Zebrias keralensis* Joglekar. Hitherto it has been recorded only from the Arabian Sea, at Aleppy on Kerala Coast (South West India). The present record extends the distribution of the species to the North East Coast of India also.

Material: One specimen measuring 120.0 mm (S.L.), collected from trawl catches, off Visakhapatnam, on 30-12-78.

Description: Counts: D.67; A.57; C.17; P. (eyed) 13; P. (blind) 11: V. 4; L. 1.83.

Measurements: Depth of body 41.6, length of head 20.8 per cent of S.L. Snout 24.0, Eye diameter 20.2, Post orbital distance 60.6, Snout to angle of mouth 32.0, angle of mouth to gill opening 64.0, length of right pectoral 36.0, length of left pectoral 20.0 per cent of head length.

Coloration: In formalin, light brown with 13 dark cross bands extending on to vertical fins. Third cross band spindle shaped. Pectoral on ocular side dark. Caudal dark with white spots. Blind side white.

Diagnosis: The specimen agrees with the description of *Z. keralensis*, which can be easily distinguished from the closely resembling *Z. synapturoides* on the basis of Lateral line scale count (75-93), and longer pectoral fin on ocular side (33-42 % in head), characteristic of the species. The range of scale count of *Z. keralensis* includes that of *Z. cochinensis* Rama Rao (1967).

Taxonomic note: Rama Rao (1967), described *Zebrias cochinensis* as a new species, on the basis of single specimen collected at Cochin, off Vypeen Island. The morphometric measurements and meristic counts of *Z. cochinensis* are not different from those of *Zebrias keralensis* Joglekar (1976). There is however a marked difference in the band pattern and caudal fin ray count, while the counts of ven-

tral fin rays and pectoral fin rays show slight variation. In *Z. keralensis* the counts are C.17-18; V.4; P. (eyed) 10-13, whereas in *Z. cochinensis* the counts are C. 14; V.5; P. (eyed) 14. The band pattern in *Z. keralensis* is characteristic of most *Zebrias* spp., in having vertical bands extending on to the dorsal and anal. The number of bands may vary from species to species but all the bands in all the species are transverse. The band pattern in *Z. cochinensis* is most uncharacteristic of any *Zebrias* sp., as the bands in the region of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th on the trunk, instead of being vertical, assume a semilunar shape. This deviation from the normal pattern of *Zebrias* spp. coupled with the reduced number of caudal fin ray count does not allow *Z. cochinensis* to be congeneric with other *Zebrias* spp. Thus *Z. cochinensis* appears to be an abnormal freak specimen with modified band pattern but otherwise agreeing in all the other characters with those of *Z. keralensis*, excepting the marked difference in caudal fin ray count. The caudal fin ray count of any *Zebrias* spp., falls in the range of 16-18 (Day 1878, Norman 1928, Chen & Weng 1965, Talwar & Chakrapany 1967, Joglekar 1976). Ochiai (1963) extended the lower range upto 15 in the case of *Z. fasciatus* and *Z. zebra*, in which the caudal is completely confluent with dorsal and anal. This character is very difficult for accurate count in the species in which the caudal is completely confluent with dorsal and anal. As the character does not show much variation between the different *Zebrias* spp., the count given for *Z. cochinensis* is perhaps either a typographical mistake or alternately an additional freak character. As the validity of *Z. cochinensis* as a species distinct from *Z. keralensis* is doubtful, it is preferred to name the present specimen after *Z. keralensis*. Accepting that the caudal fin ray count is a typographical mistake and considering that band pattern could be an abnormal feature (which is not uncommon in family Soleidae, according to Ramarao 1967, and Chakrapani & Ramarao 1977), *Z. cochinensis* appears to be a synonym of *Z. keralensis*.

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20. ON THE RECORD OF THE BLACK RUBY BARB, *PUNTIUS NIGROFASCIATUS* (GUNTHER) (PISCES: CYPRINIDAE) FROM INDIA

(*With a text-figure*)

Yazdani (1977) reported the occurrence of *Puntius nigrofasciatus* (Gunther) based on six specimens of fish collected from a small rivulet in the forest area of Ponda (Goa), and claimed it as a new record of this fish from India. This fish had earlier been recorded only from Sri Lanka.

In the course of extensive collections throughout the Deccan region, we had not come across any specimens of *P. nigrofasciatus*. It was, therefore, a matter of surprise to us to read about this new record. From Sanguem, Goa (25 kilometres from Ponda as the crow flies) the second author (S.R.S.) has been collecting hundreds of specimens of another barb, *Puntius narayani* Hora. This fish resembles the Black Ruby barb in general coloration, having three vertical black bands on its body, but lacking the characteristic black coloration on the dorsal, anal and pelvic fins (which is prominent in *P. nigrofasciatus*). We, therefore, surmised that the specimens identified by Yazdani as *P. nigrofasciatus* might actually be *P. narayani*.

P. narayani was first described by Hora in 1937 from the Cauvery river in Coorg, and it closely resembles *P. nigrofasciatus* not only in its colour pattern, as stated earlier, but also in having a complete lateral line and in the absence of barbels. The fin-ray and other counts for the two species are as follows:—

P. nigrofasciatus (as given by Day): D. 3/8; A. 2/5; P. 15; V. 9; C. 19; L. 1. 20-21.

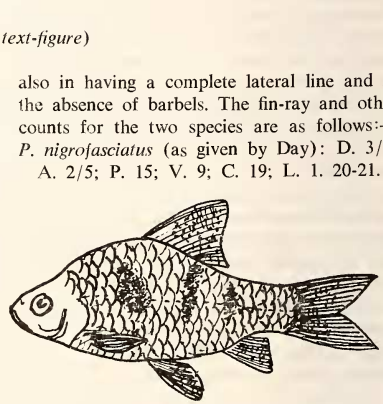

Fig. 1. *Puntius narayani* Hora (after Hora, 1937).

P. nigrofasciatus (as given by Munro): D. 3/8; A. 3/5; P. 1/12; L.1. 20-22; L. tr. 8 ($4\frac{1}{2}+3\frac{1}{2}$).

P. narayani (as given by Hora): D. 3/9; A. 3/6; P. 14; V. 9; C. 18; L.1. 22; L.tr. 9 ($4\frac{1}{2}+4\frac{1}{2}$).

In the absence of an opportunity to examine the actual specimens determined by Yazdani, our surmise that these specimens might not be *P. nigrofasciatus* could not be definitely ascertained. In August, 1979 we